



42nd Infantry Division NEWS

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9-11 ‘Never Forget’ Flag Presented to 42nd Infantry Division and Task Force Liberty

FORT DRUM, NEW YORK – Soldiers of the 42nd Infantry Division task force, known as Task Force Liberty, momentarily paused from their deployment preparations on September 11th to remember the tragic events of three years ago. Part of the division ceremony at Fort Drum included a presentation to the command of the 9-11 remembrance flag, depicting the 42nd Infantry Division’s new motto, “Never Forget.”

“We stand here today, three years after that terrible day, to remember the sacrifice and devotion of so many Rainbow Soldiers,” said Maj. Gen. Joseph Taluto, the 42nd Infantry Division Commander to the more than one hundred assembled Soldiers.

Soldiers from the Rainbow Division were among the first military responders at the World Trade Center site on September 11th, 2001. The division would later assume command and control of the entire New York National Guard joint task force for response and recovery in lower Manhattan. The National Guard response in New York City would reach more than 1,800 Soldiers, Airmen, Sailors and Marines in the days and weeks following the attacks.

The 9-11 “Never Forget” flag was designed and produced for the 42nd Infantry Division by Gwendolyn Loiacono from the Cono Flags Company in Wilmington, North Carolina.

The flag is based on her 9-11 Remembrance Flag, produced and sold commercially in order to raise funds for the 9-11 victims and their families.

“When such an historical event takes place, it is our duty as American citizens to ensure that our future generations keep these memories alive,” Loiacono added.

“The flags are intended for the families who lost loved ones, the survivors, the rescue workers, the Armed Forces who are passionately fighting to keep our country free from terrorism,” describes Loiacono, “they are for anyone who has been directly affected by the events of September 11th, 2001.”

Soldiers gathered at the Fort Drum commemoration were the first to see the Rainbow Division’s “Never Forget” flag and hear of its symbolism from the task force commander.

“The red background of the flag symbolizes the lives lost and blood shed by our fellow Americans ... past, present and future,” Maj. Gen. Taluto told the assembled Soldiers. The 42nd

Division lost two of its citizen-Soldiers on that September day, a New York City firefighter, and the other a member of the World Trade Center security staff.

"The pentagon and towers represent three of the most recognized structures ever built on U.S. soil," he continued, "The twin towers may be out of our sight, but they will never be out of our minds."

The stars symbolize the airplanes that were needlessly sacrificed on that September day. The single star outside the Pentagon and towers represents the brave passengers who diverted the one plane in Shanksville, Pennsylvania, saving countless others.

The blue circle surrounding the pentagon and towers represents the unity of the American people after the terror attacks. Instead of fear and helplessness, Americans united together to respond, to comfort those in grief, and to recover.

"Once America removes the memories, the risk of another 9-11 will surely occur," wrote Ms. Loiacono to the Rainbow Soldiers. "'Never Forget' is a perfect message to send out around the world."

Maj. Gen. Taluto also presented the 9-11 "Never Forget" flag to each of Task Force Liberty's brigade commanders following the division's successful mission readiness exercise on September 20th, 2004. Commanders from the 3rd Infantry Division's 1st and 3rd Brigade Combat Teams, the 116th Brigade Combat Team, 278th Regimental Combat Team, the 42nd Aviation Brigade, Engineer Brigade, Division Artillery and Division Support Command received the "Never Forget" flags to fly at their respective command posts in Iraq.

"Our division slogan, "Never Forget," represents more than our commitment after September 11th," Taluto told the Task Force Liberty Soldiers. "As the 42nd Division continues to move forward, we must never forget the sacrifice of those Soldiers who came before us. We must never forget the Rainbow Soldiers who liberated thousands at Dachau during World War II. We must never forget how our division first formed in 1917 from a diverse group of National Guard units to serve in World War I, much the same way that Task Force Liberty now prepares for our role in the Global War on Terror," he said.

Rainbow Division units mobilized for Operation Iraqi Freedom include the 42nd Infantry Division Headquarters Company, the Aviation and Engineer Brigade Headquarters, the Division Artillery Headquarters, Division Support Command Headquarters, 1st Battalion, 150th General Aviation Support Battalion, 50th Main Support Battalion, 642nd Division Aviation Support Battalion, 250th Signal Battalion, 642nd Military Intelligence Battalion, 42nd Military Police Company, 272nd Chemical Company, 42nd Division Band, Battery E (Target Acquisition), 101st Field Artillery, 42nd Rear Operations Cell and 173rd Long Range Surveillance Detachment.

The Soldiers in the Task Force Liberty will deploy to Iraq later this year.

RAINBOW,...NEVER FORGET!